

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOUSES DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



ON THE DECK OF THE BURNING SHIP.

## AMONG PIRATES, AND HOW WE ESCAPED FROM THEM.

Yes, it was but too true that we were on fire; the wool must have been either over-closely packed while damp from recent exposure, or some of the miscellaneous cargo (of which we had a small portion on board) must have given rise to it. Whatever the cause, the effects were but too evident. I don't know how it was, but a sentence I have often heard, "For all that travel by land or waters we beseech thee, O Lord," rushed into my mind. There was a terrible need of such a prayer now.

Not to cause unnecessary panic amongst the crew, I went and reported it quietly to the captain. He immediately called all hands, and, having summoned them aft, thus addressed them:—

"You all know, my lads, I'm a man of few words. Well, I'm sorry to tell you that the wool appears to have caught fire by itself, and if we let it go on there won't be a man Jack of us alive by this time forty-eight hours. We are more than a thousand miles from New Zealand, which is the nearest safe place to make for; but we must try it. There are some islands nearer, but they are uninhabited, and, if the ship can't be saved, we

shall be left there for life. So all I have to say is, that the strictest obedience to my orders is the only hope you have; and further, that I will shoot the first man that disobeys me, because he will risk the lives of all. Its no use trying the boats, for they are both leaky; so let us work together, my lads, and we may save her yet."

He then ordered the carpenter to stand by to open the main hatchway, and placed the crew so as to hand up buckets of water as quickly as possible. A hose was also led from the head and bilge pumps (for she always had a deal of water in her bottom). Having made these preparations, he ordered the hatchway to be opened.

Such a sight as we then beheld was calculated to strike terror to the boldest heart. As soon as the hatchway covers were removed, a jet of flame and horrid black smoke darted upwards, some ten or twelve feet into the air, with a mighty roar, accompanied by a stench from the burning wool which beggars description. The cheeks of the most daring grew pale as they gazed, while the captain shouted out in a voice of thunder—

"Down with the water you have, and clap on the hatches; it's our only chance. Quick, I say; down with them at once."

Roused from our momentary trance by the stentorian voice of Captain Ray, we seized the covers and pressed them down into the loamings. They ignited as we replaced them, but delay was certain death, and in two or three minutes they were barred down.

"Keep the water going," said the captain. "Starboard watch forward, port watch aft; and you and your mate, Evans," he added, turning to the carpenter, "plug the scuppers and hawse-holes at once; we may have a chance when we can get a few inches of water on the deck."

His orders were obeyed, and in about half an hour we had the upper deck well afloat. He then directed that we should cut small holes in the deck here and there, and keep emptying water down them as fast as possible.

By one o'clock we had so far subdued the upper portion of the fire that we could approach the holes without running the risk of suffocation. But we knew only too well that it was physically impossible with the means at our command to check the ultimate progress of the fire. Our crew only consisted of twenty souls, all told, which, without the officers, steward, and cook, left but fourteen, or seven in each watch, including the carpenter, and—fire or no fire—they must have needful rest. Two long days passed away with unremitting exertions on our part to get the fire under. On the third I spoke to the captain when handing in my day's work, saying—

"Don't you think, sir, it will be almost better to make one of the Kermantu islands than risk this much longer? The fire is gaining ground rapidly, although the deck is pretty cool. The foremost bulkhead was quite warm about an hour ago; and if the men are driven out of the fore-castle, I don't know what we shall do."

"Well, we will hold on till this time to-morrow, at all events," said the captain. "If we are no better then, we must up helm and run, I suppose, for one of those islands. We'll try all we know first, though," added the captain in a cheerful voice. I should mention that our cargo was not insured, nor, indeed, the ship herself; and the captain was part owner, which accounted for his unwillingness to run her aground or desert her when there was no chance of recovery. It's not a comfortable feeling to turn in with, I assure you, the idea that you may be driven out at any hour by the flames; and, as you may imagine, we didn't get too much sleep, any of us, at this time.

Next day the fire had increased. The bulkhead in the fore-castle had become so hot that the men refused to stop there any longer. So the captain had to give up his state cabin to them, only keeping his sleeping berth. That afternoon we put the helm up, and shaped our course for the Kermantu. We now kept the water going continuously. If we could but reach the island, our lives would be, at all events, safe for the present. For two days we held on our course. Our only fear now was lest the wind should fall light; but happily we were spared this additional horror of our situation. On the afternoon of the sixth day since the discovery of the fire, land was reported by the look-out man, and at eight o'clock that evening we ran the ship aground on a reef about a mile from the island of Garcia, the principal of the desert group known as the Kermantu islands.

The captain directed me to take the carpenter and six men, and with the longboat (which had been patched into a seaworthy condition within the last day or two, as a last resort in case of absolute necessity) endeavour to land and find out if there was anything on the island capable of sustaining life; also to ascertain whether there was a tolerable landing-place.

Having with great difficulty launched the boat overboard, we stepped into it. The sea was fortunately almost calm, and we were therefore free from apprehension on that account. As I turned to wave a temporary adieu, I noticed that the flames were already visible from the fore-castle hatchway, and I judged that no time was to be lost. "Give way, men," said I; "the sooner we are back the better, for the flames are showing now."

The men obeyed in silence. We reached the shore, and I lit a fire, as previously agreed upon, by a slow-match we had brought with us, and by its light found that the island was thickly covered with vegetation, amongst which palms were conspicuous. I was rather astonished at this, as we had always imagined these islands to be mere barren rocks. On turning round to take a view of the ship, I was startled to observe that the flames were ascending the foremast, and casting a lurid light on the surrounding sea. Unable to master the uneasy feeling which possessed me, I shouted out to the men to return to the boat, and on reaching it said—

"I am getting afraid that they will be in danger on board. The other boat won't swim, and I think we had better return immediately."

The carpenter agreed with me; so we got the boat afloat again and pulled for the ship.

Suddenly a dull booming sound broke upon our ears, and a fierce jet of blood-red flame sprang up into the air, succeeded by a dense smoke which entirely obscured the hull. "What is that?" I exclaimed in terror.

"I'm afraid that the gunpowder has exploded," said the carpenter; "if so, there's little left of the poor fellows on board."

"What, gunpowder? I never knew we had any on board."

"Why, no, it was a sort of secret," answered the carpenter; "but we had some six or eight large barrels right aft; and depend upon it that's it."

The crew had ceased pulling in their terror. I ordered them to give way, and in ten minutes we were alongside.

The carpenter's prognostication was but too true. The captain had, it appears, as I afterwards learned, brought out with him from England a quantity of gunpowder for the Chilian Government. His motive for concealing a knowledge of this fact from me and the crew I could

never learn; but I fancy that, on the discovery of the fire, he had been unwilling to frighten us, and trusted more-over to the fact that it was well down in the bottom of the after-hold, with a thick covering of planking over it, and therefore comparatively safe from anything but an universal conflagration—this very fact of course rendering the effects of the explosion more terrific. The scene which met our eyes on gaining the deck was one which I would rather leave undescribed. The furiously-burning hull, the blackened and mutilated corpses of those who had not been blown into the air, amongst which was that of the poor captain, and the horrible fœtor which was produced by the mixture of burning wool, gunpowder, and bodies in the after-part of the ship, produced on our minds such a feeling of horror and terror that for some moments we were incapable of moving or withdrawing our eyes from the scene. At length, knowing that our own lives were in momentary danger, I turned to the men and said, "We had better save our own lives now. Jump into the boat as you are, for we can save nothing."

All obeyed save one, who, exclaiming that he *must* fetch his money, ran to the fore-castle hatchway. The smoke must have choked him, for he seemed to roll or fall downwards, and scarcely had he disappeared than another forked tongue of flame shot upwards from the fore-castle, and the whole hull, fore and aft, seemed to burst into a sheet of fire. I felt the burning glow on my face, and, dazzled, scorched, and almost suffocated, threw myself into the boat, in which the carpenter and the other five men had already seated themselves. To have attempted to save the other would have been sheer madness. We pulled in frantic haste from the ill-fated vessel, and rested on our oars when we had reached a safe distance; and in mournful silence we watched the burning hull till, in about half an hour, she gave a sudden lurch backwards off the reef, and all that was left of the "Amazon" on the surface of the water was a few blackened and charred fragments of her timbers.

It is difficult to express the sense of utter desolation that stole over our minds as we watched the final catastrophe of the ship which had so lately been our home. All was gone—money, clothes, papers; and, far worse, our captain and second mate, together with two-thirds of the crew, had died a violent and sudden death. I am not ashamed to say that tears sprang into our eyes as we reflected on their fate. We did not, however, spend much time in useless lamentation; before making for the shore we pulled over the spot to see if perchance any might yet survive the effects of the explosion, an idea which had not before struck us. Our search was, however, vain—not a soul beside ourselves was saved.

It was a beautiful starlit night, such a one as is never seen in the northern hemisphere. The moon was in her first quarter, and by her light we could see in the distance the long low line of surf beating against the reef, which, at about half a mile nearer the shore, rose above the surface of the water. After our unsuccessful search, the men had almost unknowingly rested on their oars, listening to that indescribably plaintive moaning sound which in calm weather is produced by the rise and fall of the water on the rocks; while I, too, felt the influence of the same, and was lifting up my heart in thankfulness to Him who had so providentially preserved us from the fate of our unfortunate shipmates. I was suddenly startled by the carpenter grasping my arm and saying, "Hush, what's that? Listen."

We all turned our faces towards the island, which the carpenter was regarding with an intent gaze.

"A boat, as I live!" exclaimed he. "We're saved men yet."

There was no mistake; the smooth water conveyed a sound that could only be that of oars. We heard the alternate "thud" as they struck the sides of the rowlocks, and we gazed over the blue surface in indescribable amazement.

I do not know which sentiment possessed us most—that of thankfulness at the probable succour we should receive, or wonder at there being any living souls in such an out-of-the-way part of the world. Some of the men inclined to superstition would have it that no good could befall us from hearing such a sound; that it was some spiritual visit foreboding death to us; and made other remarks of a like nature. As for myself, I was not afraid of its being a visit from anything save of flesh and blood, but was considerably puzzled to account for any one being in the neighbourhood. Aborigines I knew there were none; so I supposed that some others, equally unfortunate with ourselves, had been cast away here also, and, impelled by pity, had come off to see if they could render assistance in case of there being any survivors of the explosion which they doubtless had witnessed from the island.

Meanwhile the boat approached, and loomed larger and larger every instant. Presently she was within hail, and a voice broke the silence of the night.

"Boat ahoy!"

"Hallo; who are you?" was our reply.

"I guess you'll soon find that out," was the audible response from some one in the boat, which had now got sufficiently near to enable us to distinguish its occupants.

"Way enough," added her coxswain, "and you, Pete, hand up the lantern and let's have a look at our friends."

The nasal twang of the speaker proclaimed him an unmistakable Yankee. In obedience to his order a lantern was produced and held up to enable him to take a survey of our forlorn selves. The scrutiny seemed to satisfy him, though I cannot say that the appearance of himself and his companions was equally gratifying to us. There were eight men, each possessing a most villainous countenance, the greater part with wild shaggy beards and uncouth clothing. Two of them were negroes, dressed in striped calicoes, whose aspect was even worse than that of the others. The coxswain was a fine-looking man of about forty-five years of age. He would have been handsome but for a scar across his cheek which rendered his face perfectly hideous. A pair of old-fashioned ship's pistols were stuck into his waist-belt, while in the bottom of the boat lay a heap of cutlasses and muskets, which did not speak well for their pacific intention.

After gazing at us for a few minutes, he lowered the lantern and burst into a hoarse laugh. "Well," said he, "I calculate this beats cock-fighting. And pray, stranger, may I ask how you came to be here?"

I detailed in as few words as possible the loss of the vessel, and our own escape; and then added, "You, I suppose, are living on the island. I can assure you we are as much surprised to see you as you are to find us here."

"Ay, my lads, and you'll be more astonished yet before we've done with you. But come along, we'd better be moving; you'll follow, I suppose, if we show the way. Out oars," he added, turning to his crew.

They gave way, and we followed them astern, wondering who our new-found acquaintances might be. They led us round a point of the island, where, to our great surprise, we beheld, when sufficiently close in, a number of huts surrounded by shrubs, etc. In a few moments we touched a sandy beach, and getting good way on the boats drove them high enough up to step out dry-shod.



It was soon evident that there were other inhabitants besides those already seen; some half-dozen men came down to receive their companions, and we were presently the centre of a curious group, who insisted on our relating our story in full. We complied with their request, and then inquired how it happened that they had also found their way to the island of Garcia.

"Well, I guess it's just as well to tell you all about it slick out," said the spokesman, the same who had addressed us in the boat. "The fact is, strangers, we're jest no better and no wuss than gentlemen of no particular profession. When we're short of anything, we take it from those as has got it to spare. We never kill any one except in self-defence; and that's fair, you know, all the world over. This is the lieutenant," he added, turning to one standing by, "and when I'm away he carries on. Now, stranger, I don't see as how you can do better than jine us; for you must be either mess-mates or prisoners. As to how we got here, why, the less said about that the better. What do ye say to it? Will you join?"

What could we say? I turned to my men, and was about to speak, when the carpenter drew me aside and said, "It seems to me, sir, that the best thing we can say is to tell them we'll obey them. They fix no time, and no work in particular, so we don't bind ourselves to much; and though to be sure we shall be watched, it won't be quite so strictly as if we were prisoners; and then we may find a chance to escape."

This was shrewd enough advice. "But how?" said I. "It doesn't seem that they have anything bigger than a boat."

"Ah, your eyes then weren't as sharp as mine, sir. If I didn't see the masts of a schooner over the trees of the point yonder, I'm a Dutchman; and there may be a chance that way. Anyhow, it's best to say yes."

My mind revolted from giving any countenance even for a moment to such a gang of scoundrels as those into whose hands we had fallen. However, there seemed no help for it; so I approached the captain (as I will hereafter call him), and demanded permission to speak to my men for a few minutes apart to talk over his proposition.

"Very good," said he; "but remember," he added, with an oath, "that you'll all be watched, and if you ever play us false, you'll be quieted by a leaden pill in no time."

Having called together the boat's crew, I repeated what the carpenter had said: they unanimously approved of his suggestion, and further promised to implicitly obey any orders I might give them. So we rejoined the others, and (Heaven forgive me for the action!) I told the captain that we would join his band. He repeated his warning, and then led us to a hut, and gave us a plentiful supper.

I must now give a slight description of the pirate village—for such I may almost call it. Some seven or eight huts fronted the beach, overshadowed by tall palm-trees, which appeared to have thriven on the sandy soil with remarkable success. It is a peculiar and useful circumstance that all species of this tree flourish in a soil which would support scarcely any other description of vegetation; thereby enabling the coral atolls and reefs, which from year to year rise above the surface of the water, to produce natural landmarks for the benefit of the navigator. The central part of Garcia island, however, was covered with a richer soil, which produced bananas, mangoes, guavas, oranges, and other fruits in abundance—some indigenous, and others planted by the pirates, who, in spite of their lawless profession, seemed by no means indifferent to the comforts of neatly-kept

gardens and well-furnished huts. At some little distance from the others, beneath the shadow of a hill which traversed the island, and partially concealed from view by the thick foliage, was situated the cottage of the captain, which only boasted a superior collection of arms by way of distinction from its companions. The furniture of all was alike rude, save a few articles plundered from passing merchantmen.

When we had finished our supper, the captain assigned us a couple of huts to live in, at the same time informing us that, as soon as we had "settled down a bit," we should have to construct new ones for ourselves. Strange as was the company into which we had fallen, and fraught with weighty events as the last four-and-twenty hours had been, partly from nautical habit of sleeping under disturbing circumstances, and partly from sheer fatigue, we were soon buried in slumber. I, for my own part, though fully realizing the danger of our new position, felt only too thankful to the Providence which had preserved my life to give way to despair for the future.

In a few days we had made the intimate acquaintance of our new companions, and had learned from the more communicative something of their past history. The captain, lieutenant, and nine others had formed part of the crew of a merchant vessel bound from Sydney to China in ballast. They had been but a few days at sea when their captain discovered himself to be a brute, devoid of common humanity. Roused by his tyranny to acts which they had long since repented, they had murdered him and such of the crew as would not join their party, and, seizing the ship, had endeavoured to make one of the island groups in the South Pacific. Driven by a storm to the southward, they were drifting about in the latitude of these islands, when they accidentally came across a schooner bound from Fiji to Sydney, laden with yams. Knowing that they would inevitably be regarded with suspicion if overhauled by any passing man-of-war or other vessel, they determined to seize the schooner and make for the island in the Kirmandu group, which the lieutenant had once visited and watered at, although its character was known but to few people. They accordingly placed the schooner's crew of five persons in their own vessel, and then scuttled her; thus for the second time committing murder. We all know how swift is the downward progress in crime. It was with no intention of turning pirates that they had in the first instance been guilty of mutiny; yet, having got so far, there was no retreat. They made the island safely, and, retaining the schooner, had ventured out occasionally to plunder any passing vessel, but too often sacrificing the lives of the unhappy crew if they deemed that there was any danger of their giving information which might lead to discovery. The captain, lieutenant, and five of the men were Americans, the remaining four English convicts, whose term of transportation had expired, many of the original crew having deserted for the gold-diggings. The remainder of the pirates, five in number, including the two negroes, were part of the crew of a captured vessel, who, like ourselves, had purchased life by consenting to join the band. Four of them appeared to enjoy their lawless life, but one seemed to speak regretfully of bygone days, when he was unstained with crime, and looked forward to a happy return and meeting with those who now mourned him doubtless as lost for ever.

It would occupy me far longer than time will permit if I were to enter into details of our life. On two occasions the schooner left the island, and, remaining absent about a fortnight or ten days, returned with booty of no

great value, but useful enough to men in our position. On the second occasion she brought back three Fijee women, who were rapidly appropriated as wives by one of the Yankees and the two negroes. Happily they did not consider us sufficiently trustworthy to be sent on these expeditions, and thus saved us the terrible alternative of shedding blood or being put to death in case of refusal. I must now hasten on to tell how we effected our escape. Six months had passed away, and I had become very intimate with the man whom I before mentioned as apparently dissatisfied with the life he was leading. His name, by-the-bye, was Palmer. By the carpenter's advice I had also succeeded in ingratiating myself to a considerable extent with the captain and his lieutenant by my apparent acquiescence in their villainous plans; so much so, in fact, that one night he informed me that I might consider myself as third in command of the gang, and that he intended to send me away on the next cruise. How utterly sick at heart I felt whilst smiling and joking with the ruffian I can hardly describe, but it was necessary to show compliance with everything to lull suspicion; and, besides, my men took their cue from me. However, we were carefully watched, and always interrupted if seen conversing together for any lengthened time. Every night at sunset a watch of two men was set to look after the schooner, which lay in the creek before mentioned, which creek could only be left with an easterly wind. A few days after I had come to the conclusion that, at all hazards, something should be attempted to seize the schooner and, if possible, to escape in her, Palmer and I happened to be watchmates: I insensibly led our conversation to his past life, and he confessed to me that he was as desirous as myself to escape, but did not see how to manage it. Turning round, I suddenly said, "Would you stick by us if we were to attempt it?"

"Indeed I would," was his reply.

"There's no time like the present," said I, "as the wind has come round to the eastward; and if we could leave to-night we might get away undiscovered. Are there any provisions on board the schooner?"

"Plenty," was his answer; "they took them on board three days since."

I quietly made my way to the huts and roused the carpenter, and, getting him to wake three of our party (who occupied a separate hut), proceeded to that in which the other two were sleeping. To rouse them was a matter of no small danger, for two of the original band slept in the same room; and, if they were awakened, almost certain death awaited us. Having gained the hut, I gently shook the man nearest the door, who I believed was one of our own party. He turned round and asked with an oath "who I was rousing. It wasn't his watch." It was one of the others! Terrified at the mistake I had committed, I made no answer, and remained perfectly silent, hidden by the dark shade of the wall. Apparently satisfied that it was merely fancy, he turned round to sleep again. In about ten minutes I tried again, and fortunately touched the right man. Whispering him to be silent and wake his companion, I got him to turn out, wondering what could be the matter. The other man sprang up and was about to speak, when I checked him with "Silence, as you value your life;" and then, bidding them follow me as gently as they could, I gained the open air and drew breath more freely. When we got into the shade of the trees, I found the carpenter and the other men, and then in a few words told them all of my intention. One of the men refused to have anything to do with it, and would

have doubtless given the alarm but for fear of the others. I said, "Very well; we must bind you then for our own safety;" and in a few moments he was accordingly secured by the waist-belts of his companions; and to render him less able to frustrate our flight, I gagged him with a piece of wood and my pocket-handkerchief. There was no time to be lost; we launched the boat (fortunately the only one on the island, our own having been lost some time previously), and in another minute had reached the schooner, which lay but fifty yards from the shore. Fortunately an axe was to be found, with which the mooring hawser was immediately severed. I then ordered the boat to be scuttled, for she was too large to take with us, and we had to pass so close to the point of the creek that I feared, in the event of an alarm being given, it might possibly be recovered by a bold swimmer, for we were unable to discover in our hurried search any fire-arms, and we had all forgotten even to attempt bringing any.

We made sail, and in a short time we had gathered good way. Palmer, who knew the ground, took the helm, while I anxiously listened for any sounds of alarm. I could hear no noise, and began to congratulate myself on our good fortune. In ten minutes we should be safe.

Suddenly a yell rang through the silent night that resounded far and wide. It was the man we had bound calling for assistance. The gag had given way. In five minutes we heard the whole shore re-echoing with the shouts of the pirates, as they became aware of the trick we had played them. As I expected, they made for the point which we had to pass within biscuit-throw. Foremost among them was the figure of the captain telling some to search for the boat, and ordering those who had muskets to reserve their fire till we came closer. As we approached the entrance, I turned to Palmer and said, "Drop on the deck when I give the word." He promised to obey. The crew I sent below. Closer and closer we came to the point. I saw the deadly band ready to pour forth their contents, and turned to the helmsman with "Drop now," throwing myself on the deck as I did so. It was too late; the volley came as I uttered the words, and poor Palmer fell with a bullet through his head. The schooner nearly broached to as she felt the swell. I seized the helm, and in another instant we had glided from beneath the shadows of the point. Volley after volley was sent after us by the furious and baffled pirates, fortunately, in their haste, harmless. In half an hour we were free.

We were free of the island, undoubtedly; and, in the transport of joy at our deliverance, we did not reflect on our actual situation, which was, after all, full of peril. Pursuit there was no danger of, but another enemy, almost as remorseless, was about to assail us. There was not a morsel of food or more than a small beaker of water on board! It was but too true; trusting to Palmer's account, I had neglected to attempt any provision in the way of food. Perhaps it was fortunate that I did not, for delay would have been fatal. Yet the dreadful thought that we were doomed to perish by famine almost caused us to regret our precipitancy. No human aid seemed likely (unless, indeed, we returned to the island, and even that, in the present state of the wind, was impossible). The men behaved nobly; instead of blaming me, they voluntarily stated their readiness to suffer and, if needs be, die in company. None breathed a word of complaint.

Two days passed away. We had drunk the small quantity of water, and, to increase our sufferings, the third day brought a calm. The hot sun poured its relentless rays on us as, faint and parched, we dragged

ourselves wearily along the deck. How we prayed for rain—for, neglectful as we had been, we were not ignorant from whence alone could come our help. On the fourth day one of our men went raving mad; he had insisted on drinking salt water, and the usual effect followed. The next day I and two others were utterly exhausted. I threw myself on the cabin deck and prayed—yes, prayed—for death—and then I slept.

In a few hours afterwards I was awakened from an almost death-like sleep by the voice of the carpenter feebly calling me through the hatchway. "A breeze has sprung up, and there's a sail in sight bearing down to us," were his words. I heard no more. Animated by renewed hope, I tried to rise, but fell fainting on the deck, and lay unconscious.

The stranger boarded us; and her officer stopped amazed as he stepped up on our deck. Two of the men lay upon the hatchway in the last stage of emaciation, unable to speak, while the carpenter feebly gasped out a welcome. We were taken on board the ship and tended with every care. One poor fellow never rallied, but found a watery grave on our passage to Valparaiso, whither the "Amelia," as she was called, was bound. The others, with myself, recovered, and reached port in safety, whence we returned to England in a homeward-bound ship; and so ended one of the most eventful voyages I ever made.

#### VISIT TO A PAUPER SCHOOL.

A cold morning, with a damp atmosphere, which gave no promise of future sunshine, made an extra effort necessary to rise from our comfortable beds, and prepare for a day in the country. But our arrangements had all been made regardless of weather, and, as the train whirled us out of London, we left the fog behind us, brooding over the monster city, and, as the grey clouds which curtained the heavens were gradually drawn aside, the fitful sunbeams poured forth to cheer us on our way.

We had heard and read of metropolitan workhouses, of casual wards, and pauper hospitals. We were now on our way to visit a similar class of institution, where the children of our pauper population found shelter from temporal misery and the contamination of vice; but how different in organization and in results was this establishment will, I trust, appear as our narrative proceeds.

As we approached the building in the omnibus which had been sent for us to the station, we were struck by its immense size. Architecturally graceful it certainly was not, but what it lacked in ornamental design it made up for in boldness of outline and vastness of proportion. I was informed by the chaplain that the building, from end to end, measures 600 feet long, being the same length as the "Great Eastern" steamship. Yet, though so unadorned and severely simple in structure, there was in front of the entrance door an attempt at columns, which seemed to belong to some mystic order that the ancients never knew, but which served to support a solid verandah under which we alighted.

We were most kindly received, both by governor and chaplain, not to mention the dignified welcome of a large black retriever, who acted as pioneer and walked majestically before us the whole day long. Through long galleries, across which the noonday sun was now streaming, we wandered along, and could not help remarking the exquisite cleanliness of the floors and staircases. "Had you seen them this morning," observed the chaplain, "after the children had tramped

along them on their way to and from chapel, you would not have thought so; but all this has to be cleaned every morning."

We walked through the girls' school-room, where they were seated at the regulation desks in rows, three or four deep. Some were busy with slates and sums. One girl I noticed, apparently about fourteen or fifteen years of age, who had lost the use of her right arm, was writing slowly, but with great neatness, with her left hand. As we passed along, I was not a little puzzled to hear the chaplain summon "Plum-pudding" from the ranks of scholars; but the mystery was soon solved, as a neat, rosy girl stepped forward, and declaimed in a clear, bell-like voice, and with dramatic energy and feature, a capital receipt for making a Christmas plum-pudding. She seemed to enjoy reciting it as much as we did hearing her, and, when she finished, our applause was great and genuine, and a series of commendatory pushes and shovings sent her back into obscurity.

The school band next claimed our attention, which, in the large open courtyard, was performing several popular airs with great effect. I should here mention that the playgrounds of this school, which are very large in extent, are three in number: one for the infants, another for the girls, and the third and largest for the boys. They were originally laid down in the usual way with gravel, but it was found that the dust unavoidably raised during exercise or playtime hurt the children's eyes, and, in consequence, the guardians, at a very large expense, had the whole of the three acres paved with stone. The result of this is, that the open spaces have now no drawbacks, but offer every facility for enjoyment and recreation. It was in the largest of these three courtyards that the school band was assembled—happy-looking, painstaking little fellows they were, in their blue uniforms and red facings, puffing away at the wind instruments as if their very lives depended on their blowing lustily and with good courage. We had not much time, however, to criticise the performance, for dinner was on the way, and the band, with its master at its head, had an important duty to perform; namely, to march, playing all the while, into the dining-hall. This they prefaced by marching once round the playground, and then facing about, and proceeding, to the sounds of their martial music, straight into the house. It was wonderful to see the perfect order with which these children, several hundreds in number, marched into dinner—the girls entering in at one door, and the boys at another, with the band preceding them. There was a military discipline about the whole ceremony. The children did not walk in unbroken procession, which would inevitably have caused delay and confusion, but in *battalions*, so that when they reached the seats allotted to them there was no scuffling or hesitation, one batch being fairly seated before another was admitted. The boys all sat on one side, the girls on the other, and each was provided with a knife and fork, and bread.

Hitherto all had been quietness and expectation, but when grace had been said there was a stir and flutter of excitement. Behind one long table stood two or three men, who served out the meat on hot plates placed in front of them, from which certain lads, duly appointed as waiters, shoved it on to the usual dinner-plate, and carried it off to each child in turn. By this means the child served last received his portion as hot as the one served first, which, had the meat been given in the usual way, *minus* the hot plate, would certainly not have been the case, as the process of serving lasted about half an hour. On another table were the potatoes,



hot and steaming, and delicious they looked as they were added to each plate of meat as it passed. In close proximity to both meat and potatoes stood two small boys, like sentinels, each with a basin of salt, from which they dashed little spoonfuls into each portion as it passed them by. I found that to a few of the sickly children *stout* was given. To the full enjoyment of these delights we left the juvenile multitude, and entered the chapel. The chapel lies on a higher level than the dining-hall, and is approached by a flight of stone steps. It is a plain, unornamented room, nearly square, with organ at one end and pulpit and reading-desk at the other. No "long-drawn aisle or fretted vault" here certainly, or Gothic arch, or mediæval windows; but will their absence cause the sound of those youthful voices to be less precious to God, or invalidate the orphan's prayer which, Sunday after Sunday, is borne upward to the Heavenly Father's throne? The children chant the service, for the authorities find that it secures more attention than if they took little or no audible part in it.

On leaving the chapel, we wound our way through a labyrinth of corridors and staircases into the nursery. Here was a touching sight. In a long, rather low-roofed room, were seated at a low table between twenty and thirty infants. Some of them appeared as young as two years, but we were informed that most of them were stunted in their growth, and were really several years older than they appeared.

They had finished dinner, and some of them rose as we entered, and, clustering round one of the gentlemen of our party, began pouring forth, quite unasked for, a volume of song. It was amusing to watch the little consultations which took place as to what was to be sung next, their faces all in a glow of excitement and delight, as Mr. A—— knelt down, and courteously listened to their prattling music. It was wonderful to think how many an infant, whose voice was then attuned to joyous melody, had been rescued from depths of degradation and sin, where sounds of blasphemy and scenes of vice had banished everything that was pure and holy. It was a blessed contrast; the comfortable room, the bright warm fire and home-like nursery fender, and tiny beds, the stout motherly-looking nurse, with the wretched homes, the cold, the hunger, the nakedness from which these poor helpless little ones had been rescued. I think they would have gone on singing till now—for the babes seemed born to sing, so incessantly and voluntarily did they keep it up—but that "nurse" stopped them at length, and then, as we turned to leave the room, the song gave place to the parting word, "Good-bye, gentle man."

We next visited the laundry, one department of which is managed entirely by women, the "wringing" process being considered too trying to the strength of young girls. The drying-room was a marvellous apartment, consisting of a row of enormous drying screens, each of which had a separate stall or niche, and that pulled in and out at pleasure. In one of the larger rooms mangle was going on, the mangle being constructed in some approved new fashion, which the governor was kind enough to explain to me, but which I confess I did not quite understand. In another room we found several young girls, scrubbing and scouring, and trotting about the wet paved floor, apparently like ducks in a pond, enjoying the mess, and talking merrily all the while. The appearance of the governor, whom they called "master," seemed to please them not a little. "Good morning, master," said one or two, looking up from their work broom in hand, whilst a cheery smile lit up their

faces; and a third, bolder than the rest, exclaimed in a tone of delight, "Jenny's in the copper, sir," and on looking round we saw a girl standing in the middle of a huge vessel, and apparently engaged in cleaning it.

"Jenny's in the copper to-day is she?" repeated the governor, smiling and quite entering into the joke; and whilst Jenny, overwhelmed by the public attention to her conspicuous position which the remark had drawn forth, turned her blushing face away, he touched her cheek, and observed that Jenny was the best person to be in the copper, for her hair was as nearly the colour of it as could be; and in truth it was a head-gear of such fashionable hue as many a Belgravian young lady might have envied.

Though our minds were so intently occupied with all we saw, the demands of hunger made themselves felt by this time, and we did ample justice to the luncheon which awaited us in one of the rooms set apart for the governor's use. These rooms are in the front part of the building, and, had the horizon been free from mist, we might have had a fine and very extensive view of the surrounding country. As it was, the distance was hazy, and the trees, which had not yet put on their leaves, still looked black and bare in the wide plains which lay stretched before us. With no dream of summer's glories to distract our imaginations, we were fain to turn to the matter-of-fact scenes of the present hours, and to devote our attention to the workshops of the establishment. These were small apartments, which ran along all one side of the playgrounds, in each of which a different trade was plied. Tailoring, shoemaking, carpentering, etc., etc., all came in for a share of our inspection. By the time we had gone through these shops, and listened to another highly successful performance of the school band, the majority of the children had assembled in the same hall where they had dined, and they favoured us with some songs very nicely sung, and several pieces of poetry remarkably well recited. But we all agreed that the girls' drill, which we afterwards went out into the playground to witness, was the most astonishing thing of all. Here some sixty or seventy of the elder girls, all in clean white pinafores, were marching with military precision round the inclosure, their drill master at their head. With hands close pressed to their side and heads erect, and not a note of music to aid them, they kept the most perfect time, and when they faced about, and at the word of command commenced a series of (apparently to us, the uninitiated) difficult manœuvres, our surprise and admiration reached its climax.

Many a regiment of painstaking volunteers might have envied the precision with which these manœuvres were executed; the firmness of step, the absence of any appearance of hesitation or uncertainty with which each young Amazon performed her part.

After saying adieu to the courteous officials, away over the green fields we sped homeward; and in the train, whilst journeying back into the vortex of London life, I mused over the scenes just witnessed. I thought of the youthful hearts throbbing within those walls, with such various emotions of love, and joy, and happiness. I dared not dwell on the possibility of future crime, which for aught we know might be lurking there; the seeds of sin and vice which only needed circumstances or opportunity to ripen into guilt. I preferred to look on the brighter side, to think with the poet that some "mute inglorious Milton" might be amongst the number, some "Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood;" and to picture these children as rescued from some fearful pit of woe, and glancing upward to the pearly gates and flowery pastures towards which we were leading them. S. L. B.

## THE ANCIENT PRUDE.



Yow ancient prude, whose wither'd features show  
 She might be young some forty years ago,  
 Her elbows pinion'd close upon her hips,  
 Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,  
 Her eyebrows arch'd, her eyes both gone astray  
 To watch yon amorous couple in their play,  
 With bony and unkerchief'd neck defies  
 The rude inclemency of wintry skies,  
 And sails with lappet head and mincing airs,  
 Duly at clink of bell to morning prayers.  
 To thrift and parsimony much inclined,  
 She yet allows herself that boy behind;  
 The shivering urchin, bending as he goes,  
 With slipshod heels and dewdrop at his nose,  
 His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,  
 Which future pages yet are doom'd to share,  
 Carries her Bible tuck'd beneath his arm,  
 And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.

She, half an angel in her own account,  
 Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,  
 Though not a grace appears on strictest search,  
 But that she fasts, and *item*, goes to church.  
 Conscious of age she recollects her youth,  
 And tells, not always with an eye to truth,  
 Who spann'd her waist, and who, where'er he came,  
 Scrawl'd upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name;  
 Who stole her slipper, fill'd it with tokay,  
 And drank the little bumper every day.  
 Of temper as envenom'd as an asp,  
 Censorious, and her every word a wasp;  
 In faithful memory she records the crimes,  
 Or real or fictitious, of the times;  
 Laughs at the reputations she has torn,  
 And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn.  
 Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,  
 Of malice fed while flesh is mortified.—COWPER.



## GEORGE BURLEY;

HIS HISTORY, EXPERIENCES, AND OBSERVATIONS.

BY G. E. SARGENT, AUTHOR OF "ADVENTURES OF A CITY ARAB."

CHAPTER LVIII.—ANOTHER RETROSPECT—THIS HISTORY PARTS WITH SOME OLD FRIENDS—BETSY HAS "A TURN" GIVEN HER.

Years and years and years passed away. I was a happy husband and father—happy, too, in my relationships in life. With Mr. Millman and aunt Rhoda I had maintained a reciprocal and, on my part, a grateful friendship. With Edwin Millman I was on terms of the closest intimacy. He, too, as I have elsewhere hinted, was married; and, as he had taken a house very near to mine, it was natural that his Lucy and my Mary should be very sisterly towards each other, as indeed they were. Then there was my old friend Betsy (*née* Miller), with her husband, who still inhabited Rose Cottage, and who thought it hard, they said, if I did not look in upon them at least three times a week. They were both of them waxing old; but theirs was a kindly winter of age, not at all cold or frosty; and nothing pleased Betsy better than to entice our children into her companionship away in the green fields, where she told them the same exciting histories of her younger days which had formerly pleased their father. Oh, she was a nice old lady, so all my youngsters declared, and I perfectly agreed with them.

As to my circumstances,—well, they were almost as prosperous as in the thoughts of my boyish days I had occasionally pictured to myself that they would be; and this, I am aware, is saying a good deal. Edwin and I were partners in the Gracechurch Street house; and our transactions were considerably extended and expanded. Consequently our names stood respectably high in mercantile circles; for "men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself." I am happy to think, as I look back upon this past, that neither Edwin nor myself were unduly elated with our success, and that we did not put our trust in uncertain riches. If we had done this, we should have laid the groundwork for future unnecessary sorrow; for we have known reverses and losses since then. But the history of these does not come within the scope of this present narrative.

With regard to other persons who, with more or less frequency, have figured in the past pages of my written history, a few lines may suffice. The old gamekeeper, Storks, and his wife, for instance, had long since been laid beside their daughter and grand-daughter in the village churchyard. I am glad to remember now that while they lived they never wanted any of the comforts their age and circumstances required, or that money could purchase. Indeed, a small pension awarded to them by the family at "the great house" in the park, together with their rent-free cottage, would have kept them from destitution, and the additional provision which I was able, and felt it my duty, for Sophy's sake, to make for them, added to their moderate income. So far, therefore, all was well; but they went to the grave sorrowing for their later loss, and reflecting very bitterly, I fear, on the author of the wrongs they had suffered.

I and my dear wife occasionally, during the lifetime of the old couple, went down into Kent, and thus kept up our acquaintance with Miss Bolster. The bustling, industrious little woman evidently prospered in her millinery and dressmaking business; but at our last visit she confided to us that she contemplated making a change in her condition and removing from the village. A bachelor mercer, named Grace, some years younger than herself, of whom she sometimes bought her "fancy articles" (her own expression), and whose shop was in the neighbouring town, had made her an offer of marriage, which she had accepted. She was therefore

shortly about to transfer her own business to the town, and to carry it on under a new name and proprietorship. It was very natural and proper; and Mary and I had found so much real happiness in a married life that we cordially rejoiced with Miss Bolster, and congratulated her on her prospects. She did not seem very sanguine, I thought; but she said she was satisfied that she was "doing the proper thing," for "women were poor creatures standing alone;" and my Mary agreed with her in this sentiment. I rather think, however, that one of the great inducements on the part of Miss Bolster to taking this step was that she should get rid for ever of her odious name and its early associations. Be this as it might, we parted with her, reiterating our good wishes, and shortly afterwards we received from her, by favour of a London friend of the husband, a small packet, done up very neatly in white paper, tied round with white ribbon, and containing, with Mr. and Mrs. Grace's compliments, a conglomerate mass of soft, dark-coloured, and (probably) indigestible pudding cake, with a due proportion of iced sugar half dissolved. Poor Marianne! I am afraid her confectioner did not do her justice. It was a plebeian affair that wedding-cake of hers, I fancy; but no matter.

In my occasional trips to Kent I had never neglected to visit St. Judith's Bay, and St. Judith's School, which, I am pleased to remember, continued to flourish. When in conversation with my old schoolmaster, I sometimes heard tidings of former schoolfellows which surprised me. Some of the cleverest boys of my time had, from different causes, but mostly from want of perseverance or principle, sunk into obscurity, and were struggling in life without much hope of recovering their former position in society, while others who were reckoned stupid and unambitious had plodded onwards and upwards to great success. I expressed surprise at this, but my old schoolmaster sagely shook his head. "It does not surprise me at all, Hurly" (he too had contracted a habit of calling me Hurly when I was at school, and he retained it to the last)—"It does not surprise me at all. It is the old story of the hare and the tortoise exemplified,—

" 'Tis the plain, plodding people we often shall find,  
Who leave the inconstant and clever behind."

And speaking of this reminds me of William Bix, the sharp and clever, or who had been reckoned so sharp and clever, in his boyhood. He had been so long unheard of, and was so confidently reported as being dead, that we all believed it. I have spoken of the various stories which were current respecting his fate, soon after his disappearance: but there was another and a later one which bore such manifest marks of authenticity and personal identity that I was fully assured the unhappy man, under one of his many aliases, had ended his life miserably in a foreign land, leaving behind him a reputation which exactly coincided with the history of his past wasted and evil life. It seemed to be a fitting, though a sad conclusion of that history; for "he that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

Of Marmaduke Tozer, as I have already said, I never heard after our meeting by the grave of my cousin; and of the Browns I knew, only incidentally, that, after collecting together the wreck of their once flourishing fortunes, and receiving some assistance from former city friends, they emigrated to America. Many years afterwards, however, I happened to see the names of Quercus and Philander Brown as the principals in a mercantile firm of some repute in New York; and it is fair, therefore, to believe that they had profited by the things

they had suffered, and had bent their energies in a new sphere towards the restoration of their shattered fortunes and hopes.

I turn from these reminiscences to my own more directly personal narrative.

One evening, about ten years after poor Sophy's death, on returning home from business, I found my old friend Betsy waiting my arrival; and, as I saw, or fancied I saw, an extra degree of importance combined with an unaccountable agitation on her expressive countenance, and as also she asked to speak to me in private, I invited her into my library.

"What is the matter, nurse?" I asked her, when we were seated.

"Oh dear, oh dear! I have had such a turn given me. Who do you think I have seen, sir?"

"I am a poor hand at guessing, Betsy. Not Marmaduke?"

"No, no: a worse than him. But you'll never guess. I have seen—William Bix."

"Impossible!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, that's what Filby said; and he tried to persuade me that I had lost my eyesight. It isn't so good as it used to be I know; but it is good enough to see a man with in broad daylight, as I have seen that man twice this very day passing outside my window. It is true, Hurly, I have, indeed."

"But, my dear Betsy, you know that William Bix has been dead these many years, and you are too wise to believe in ghost-seeing."

"It was no ghost I saw, sir; but William Bix, in flesh and blood and bones. I should know him in a thousand, or ten thousand either. I ought to, I think, considering all the trouble he used to give me as well as others."

"But you forget. We heard of his death in Paris."

"We thought we did; but it couldn't have been him that we read about in the papers. At any rate, he is alive now."

"You saw him pass your cottage, you say?"

"Twice this very day, Hurly," said Betsy, giving me for the second time, in her earnestness, my old familiar name. "Twice. I thought I must be mistaken the first time; but when he passed again—shuffling along on the pavement—and I caught sight of his face, and heard that little disagreeable cough he used to have, I was sure of him then. I am as sure it was him as I am sure that I am talking to you, sir."

"How was it—I mean what time was it you saw him, and what sort of appearance did he make?"

"I'll tell you as near as I can all about it, Hurly," said Betsy. "It was about ten o'clock this morning, and I was just sitting down to work at my window, when I looked up, and saw an oldish-looking, shabby-genteel man walking by, as if like he was going into the city—at least, he was going that way. He was shuffling along, as I said, but pretty quick too, and there was something in his walk that made me notice him. I think it put me in mind of your poor old grandfather in his last days."

"Ah! and being struck with that similarity, you were naturally prepared to trace other resemblances."

"No, but listen, Hurly. I was turning my eyes down again to my work, when the man gave that sharp dry sort of cough you remember, as if he was clearing his throat, and it gave me such a startle, for I never heard anybody besides your uncle William cough just like it. So I looked up again, just as the man had reached the corner, and I could only see his back."

"Only his back, Betsy! But one back is so like another, you know—"

"I have not done yet, sir; I saw only his back till he got quite to the corner. Then he stopped all at once, and looked back the way he had come in a half-frightened sort of manner, as if he was afraid of being followed or watched; and that was how I came to see his face."

"And it was William Bix's face; you are sure of that, Betsy?"

"I am sure of it now, Hurly; now that I have seen it a second time. I was not quite so sure then, because it was too far off. But I said to myself, 'If I had not heard of his being dead, I should say at once, there's my poor old master's good-for-nothing son.'"

"And that second time, Betsy?" I asked, with complete conviction that my good old nurse was perfectly sure in her own mind that she had had this vision, and half convinced that it was not altogether impossible; "when did you see the man again?"

"This afternoon, Hurly; only two or three hours ago. I was still sitting at my window, working, when I heard the same shuffling footsteps on the pavement outside and the same cough; and I looked up; and as plain as I see you now, sir, I saw William Bix then. I am sure I am not mistaken."

"Strange! How was he dressed?"

"Very shabby, sir. He had got on an old camlet cloak, with a high velvet collar, a white hat, greenish trousers, and a pair of cobbled shoes. I had time to notice all this; but it was his face I looked at most of all. It was the same face as ever, only grown older; the same wicked look of the eyes, and that nasty deceitful smile, that he used to have, particularly when he was half—not quite sober. And as to that, he was not quite sober this afternoon. I could tell that by his unsteady way of walking, and his watery eyes."

"But, Betsy, you know that William Bix gave up that bad practice years ago, and drank nothing stronger than tea—"

"And ginger-beer," interposed Betsy, laughing at the recollection of my uncle's behaviour on the day of my grandfather's death. "Yes, I know," she added; "but there's a text in the Bible that tells us of a hog being washed, and then going back to roll in the mud. And if William Bix is alive—as he is—and has taken to drinking again, he won't have been the first, and won't be the last reformed drunkard who has done, or will do, the same thing."

"Quite true, Betsy," I said; "for no reformation is really genuine and to be trusted which does not spring from the heart, and which is not produced there by Divine power. It is the grace of God which brings salvation, that teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly, and to deny themselves; and nothing else will do this effectually. But the news you have told me is very surprising. I cannot understand it. So long as we have believed that unhappy man to be dead too!"

"I cannot understand it either," said my old friend. "But one thing is quite certain, or next to it, that William Bix is come to life again for no good. There's some mischief going on wherever he is. You may be sure of that, my dear."

"I am afraid you are right, Betsy," said I; "happily, however, he has done you and me all the harm he is likely to be able to do; and we have survived it, and are none the worse for it now. I do not think it is in his power to injure us any further."

Betsy shook her head dubiously. She had naturally a strong terror of and belief in my uncle's power for evil, and she reminded me that if he could not injure us he might be injuring others.

"Very true; and, if it be as you say, we must try to

prevent it. Do you think, by-the-bye, that my uncle, if it were him that you saw, saw you?"

"No, I took care of that: though he might not have known me if he had, Hurly."

"Don't trust to that. You had better not let him see you; for, having passed your house twice, it is not unlikely he will pass again. If he should do so——" I paused here, for I did not like to suggest that Betsy should follow him as a spy. She, however, had no such extreme delicacy.

"If I see him again, I'll know something more of him, depend on it, sir; and I'll come and let you know directly." Saying this, my old nurse soon afterwards departed, greatly relieved in her mind by having bestowed her confidence on me.

CHAPTER LIX.—TRACKING THE CAMLET CLOAK—ANOTHER SURPRISE.

BETSY set about her task in right earnest. She made herself a screen of potted geraniums in her window, through which she could look out upon the road and take a deliberate view of every passenger without danger of being observed in return. At this window she stationed herself early on the following morning, and was rewarded for her pains by seeing the old camlet-cloaked stranger pass, about the same hour as on the previous day. There was little doubt, therefore, that William Bix—if he were indeed the man—had some object in going towards London in the morning, some petty employment there, perhaps; and that his lodging or home was not far distant from Rose Cottage.

Betsy laid her plans accordingly. Quietly pursuing her household occupations through the middle of the day, she returned to her post of observation in the afternoon, in bonnet and shawl, ready to slip out and follow the object of her suspicion before he could have time to evade her pursuit. She was successful: about five o'clock he made his appearance, walking more unsteadily than on the previous afternoon, and in another minute Betsy was in the road also. She followed him, at a safe distance, for about a mile, until he arrived at a cluster of small, dirty cottages, called Paradise Row, in a very mean neighbourhood. Here he took a key from his pocket, unlocked one of the cottage doors, and entered. Betsy observed all this, and not caring to carry on her investigations further that evening, she returned home. On the following day, however, having once more watched the camlet cloak and its wearer on their way towards London, she again sallied forth, and, making acquaintance with a woman who kept a huckster's shop almost opposite Paradise Row, she learned that "the old gentleman in the camlet cloak" had resided in that neighbourhood about a month: that his name was Howard; that he lived alone, and "did for himself;" that he was supposed to be poor, first from having chosen such a place for his home, and, next, because all the household goods he was known to possess were barely sufficient to furnish one room scantily. Possibly, however, the woman suggested, the man might be a miser; and, in that case, there was no telling but he might have heaps of money hoarded up; but, any way, it was no business of hers.

Having obtained this information, Betsy's task for that day was ended; and she set her husband to work the next morning, to follow in the wake of Mr. Howard towards the city. Our friend Filby was not so successful, however, as Betsy had been. He tracked the camlet cloak, indeed, into the crowded thoroughfare of Tottenham Court Road, and through that into St. Giles's; but there he suddenly lost sight of him; a

circumstance not to be greatly wondered at, perhaps, when it is considered that Mr. Filby was over seventy years old, and, though active enough for that age, yet stout, rather short-winded, and puffy. At all events, he returned to Rose Cottage, after an absence of three or four hours, bathed in perspiration, to report his want of success, and to express his opinion that William Bix was not worth so much trouble, with which I coincided when I received the report.

But Betsy was not satisfied. Where William Bix was, there was mischief afoot, she was sure of that; and she would search it out. Accordingly, after allowing a day or two to elapse, she herself sallied forth and gave chase to the camlet cloak, and did not lose sight of it till she had seen its wearer safely housed in a low public-house, not far from the Seven Dials, after having made a short call at a small pork shop in one of the intervening streets, probably to purchase his provisions for the day. All this Betsy faithfully reported to me in the evening; and then, by my persuasion, the matter was permitted to rest. We had gained some knowledge of the haunts of the wretched man, though to what purpose the information might turn I had not the slightest idea. I certainly had no intention of renewing my acquaintance with him; and had so little curiosity on the subject, that I declined to convince myself of the personal identity of Mr. Howard, by ocular demonstration. Nevertheless, taking for granted that Betsy was not mistaken, I was not sorry that it might eventually be in my power to send relief to my poor unhappy relative, if I should be convinced of his being in actual want.

Some weeks wore away, and, excepting that we were constantly reminded of William Bix by the regularity with which he, or his double, twice a day shuffled by Rose Cottage, nothing arising out of his reappearance occurred to disturb the equanimity of our little circle. Indeed, even Betsy became so accustomed to the sight of the white hat and old camlet cloak that she saw them pass and re-pass with comparative indifference; taking care, however, not to make herself visible to their mysterious wearer.

One day, when seated in my private room at Gracechurch Street, I was informed, by a clerk in the outer office, that a lady who particularly wished to see me had sent in her name. It was not a very usual occurrence for ladies to invade our house of business; but such things had occasionally happened; and, merely inquiring the lady's name, which the clerk pronounced to be Greece, or Grease (information that did not at all enlighten me), I told the young gentleman to usher in the visitor, who proved to be none other than my Kentish acquaintance and friend, Marianne Bolster, transformed into Mrs. Grace, wife of the country draper, and further translated by the rather affected, tip-tongued cockney clerk into Mrs. Grease.

"My dear Mrs. Grace, this is an unexpected pleasure," I said, as I shook hands with her, and begged her to be seated. It was a pleasure, and an unexpected one. The little woman looked so comfortable and respectable that it was a pleasure to me even to look at her, especially when I remembered the circumstances under which we first knew each other. Nevertheless, when I looked closer, I fancied I could detect some marks of anxiety on the lady's countenance; and I was not deceived.

"It is a great liberty I have taken," said she.

"No liberty at all; or rather a very proper one. I should have considered myself slighted if I had known you had been in London without calling on me," I said.



To which Mrs. Grace replied that I was very kind, and that she felt encouraged to tell me her trouble—for she *was* in trouble—and she had been so impressed with the hope that I could help her out of it, that she had come to London almost on purpose to see me.

Naturally I was sorry to hear that my old friend was in trouble, and equally willing to give her all the assistance in my power. I felt this and said it.

"It is about money, Mr. Burley," said the lady; desperately adding, "There, I have got it out easier than I expected."

Of course it was about money, I expected this when she began to speak of trouble; but this said but little, and I entreated Mrs. Grace to take time (for she seemed agitated), and then further to explain.

"Thank you, sir; you are very good, and I knew you would be; but it is a large sum I am in trouble about—as much as four hundred pounds." It required an effort to get this out; and when she had said it she looked down and, in a bewildered sort of way, began to twist the tassel of a neat little pelerine she had on.

"Let us understand one another, Marianne," said I. "Do you wish to borrow four hundred pounds?"

Oh no, it was not that; but Grace (her husband) had been so foolish. If he had but consulted her it would not have happened.

"What would not have happened, my good friend?"

Why this, Grace would not have become security as he had, for a friend, and so got into this trouble.

"Oh, I think I understand." But I did not, until the little woman further explained that her husband had been goose enough, (the words are hers) to sign his name to certain acceptances for four hundred pounds, for the benefit of an acquaintance who was desirous of doing business without any capital of his own.

This looked rather bad, and I shook my head. "It was unwise, certainly; for, as a matter almost of course, the four hundred pounds has gradually vanished, and your husband will have to meet the bills as they become due?" I said this interrogatively, but was not prepared for the reply—

"Vanished! Oh dear no, sir. The money has never been sent."

"Never been sent?"

"Never been sent from London, though the people have had the bills more than a month."

"My dear Mrs. Grace, I thought I understood you a minute ago; but now I do not understand you at all. Suppose you begin at the beginning and tell me all your trouble."

Upon this hint the little woman spake; the gist of her story being that her husband's friend, captivated by an advertisement he had seen in a London paper, proffering money accommodation to any amount, on extremely reasonable terms, and being anxious either to commence a business, or to increase one already commenced, persuaded the country draper to assist him in procuring a loan. "Here is the advertisement of the money-lender," said my visitor, opening her pocket-book and handing me a slip cut out from the advertising columns of a Sunday newspaper. It ran thus:—

"MONEY! MONEY!! MONEY!!! Money to any amount from Ten pounds to a Thousand, may be obtained for any number of years, at Five per cent. interest, by any person of respectable character, on the security of the borrower and a responsible friend. The object of the advertiser being to assist struggling merit rather than to accumulate large profits, the utmost consideration and inviolable secrecy will be observed in every transaction.

Application to be made (by letter only) to A. Z., — Street, Bloomsbury."

"Very inviting, I must confess," said I, giving back the paper to Mrs. Grace. "Well, and so——"

And so her husband's friend, who wanted money, wrote to A. Z., proposing to borrow four hundred pounds; and, in due time, after some further correspondence, the proposed borrower was informed by A. Z. that his references were eminently satisfactory, that all he had to do was to post the acceptances, with a certain amount of commission, in cash, to the address in Bloomsbury; and that the loan should be immediately transmitted through the same medium.

"And your husband's friend followed these instructions, I suppose?"

"Yes, he did," said the little woman, energetically.

"And, of course, has heard no more of A. Z.?"

"Not a word more, and this was a month ago," continued my visitor. And then, in reply to my further inquiries, she told me that eight acceptances of fifty pounds each, with interest added, running over a space of four years, at six months' intervals, were given. Also that the commission demanded beforehand, amounting to ten pounds, had duly accompanied the bills on their transmission by post.

"A ten-pound note, good Bank of England," Mrs. Grace added, with a sigh which led me to conjecture that this had been borrowed for the nonce from her husband; a conjecture which I afterwards found to be correct.

"I am afraid," said I, "that the ten pounds are hopelessly lost. How could any person be so blind as not to see, on the very face of the transaction, that the primary object of the benevolent advertiser was to obtain possession of the money?"

"That's just what I said when I came to know about it," said Marianne. "How could you be so blind?" I said. "But there's nobody so blind as those who won't see," she added.

"Very true; but now that your husband's and his friend's eyes are opened, they wish, I suppose, to avoid further loss and exposure?"

"Yes, sir."

"But there are difficulties in the way. In the first place we have to find A. Z.; and then—but we won't talk about difficulties. Depend upon it, I will give you what aid I can; and I trust we may be able to recover the bills."

My old acquaintance thanked me very heartily and with tears in her eyes. As to the ten pounds, she said, she never expected to see them again, and it would be a good lesson to her husband, against doing such things in future without her knowledge; plainly intimating that it would not have been done at all if he had first consulted her, which I thought likely; but, without entering into further particulars, I proposed that we should at once repair to Hatton Garden, where my old friend Mr. Fawley, the lawyer, still had his offices; and afterwards to my own house, which I desired should be the lady's home while she remained in London.

#### "JUDGE NOT, THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED."

Sorrow hath touched him—scorn him not!  
His brow is dull with care;  
The deep, hard lines upon his face  
Are graven by despair.  
To-morrow justly doomed to die  
For crime of deadly wrong,  
He feels how swift revenge's tide  
Has carried him along.

To-day, to bid a last good-bye,  
His wife and little child  
Have filled his cell, and wrung his heart  
With lamentations wild.  
His cup of punishment is full,  
His sin, how dark its blot!  
Yet Sorrow's finger bows him down:  
In pity, scorn him not!

Sorrow hath touched her—scorn her not!  
Her looks are wan and wild;  
An age of wretchedness has passed  
Since those pale lips have smiled.  
A loving mother, happy wife,  
Her household gods her pride,  
Her life appeared one dream of bliss  
Until her treasures died.  
"Tis said she idolized her home,  
Her husband, and her boys,  
And knew no higher good to seek  
When parted from her joys;  
But oh! more sad and mournful far  
This thought but makes her lot,  
Of peace, and health, and mind bereft.  
Ye happy, scorn her not!

Sorrow hath touched him—scorn him not!  
His haughtiness is bowed;  
To see him in his lonely grief  
You would not think him proud.  
A cold, hard man the world condemns,  
Unloving and unloved;  
No tale of wrong, no bitter tears  
His stony heart e'er moved;  
But now, in misery untold,  
He bends his trembling knee;  
Oh, surely such great woe as his  
Untouched we cannot see.  
His only hope, his only joy,  
Lies in that narrow bed—  
His only daughter, fair and young,  
She loved him—she is dead!  
The light is gone from out his life,  
All dim and dark his lot,  
A weight of lead is on his heart:  
In pity, scorn him not!

Sorrow hath touched him—scorn him not!  
His reckless youth is past;  
An outcast, wretched and forlorn,  
He ventures home at last:  
His father's curse upon his head,  
The curse of ten long years,  
He stands now by that father's grave,  
And wets it with his tears;  
His mother's tomb is lately made—  
This is the worst to bear—  
Alas! is *this* the answer to  
Her oft-repeated prayer?  
He stands a broken-hearted man,  
All angry thoughts forgot;  
A lifetime all mispent he rues:  
In mercy, scorn him not!

"Sorrow hath touched him—scorn him not!"  
The words will not away:  
I hear them whispered everywhere;  
They haunt me night and day.  
We cannot fathom human hearts;  
We see not how they fall;  
We know not where to praise or blame;  
Oh, why then judge at all?  
To be unkind, because we think  
The sufferer is wrong,  
This, surely, is not Christian love,  
But pride, how sadly strong!  
For all have suffered, all have sinned;  
And sin and grief combined  
Make up the burden which is borne  
On earth by all mankind.

Oh then, by all the guilt you own,  
When kneeling low in prayer;  
By all temptations round your path  
Which have not proved a snare;  
By all the aids which God has given  
To help you on your way,  
Be humbly watchful, gently kind,  
And pity those who stray;  
And even the hearts where darkness reigns,  
Where joy and peace are not—  
For such the Man of Sorrows died,  
For *His* sake scorn them not!

## A CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY IN BENGAL.

It is Christmas tide, and all the beauty and chivalry of the district are to have a merry week with the hospitable Mr. and Mrs. Besborough, of Shikarghur, in Kishnaghur, about eighty miles north of Calcutta. Young ladies of fabulous wealth or rare elegance have been invited from the last-named city, and some of the most fascinating ornaments of the civil and military services from all parts of the country are coming to prove a planter's hospitality. Every one has been cooped up during the hot and rainy weather, and now, like newly-born butterflies, all are determined to make the most of that lovely season—the Indian cold weather. The time is about eight in the morning. A delicious northerly breeze is blowing over the fields, now glowing with all the rich crops of a tropical climate, bringing, with its invigorating freshness, the faintest aroma of the scented blossoms it has passed over, instilling new life into everything which has pined and withered during the hot months. The skies are clear and blue as those of Italy. The dull, uniform-coloured face of the country is changed into a gorgeous patchwork of all the hues of the rainbow. Sheets of bright green corn serve as the groundwork to ever-varying patterns produced by plots of the snow-white poppy, amber-tinted safflower, bright blue linseed, and golden mustard-seed; while fields of the scarlet Chili pepper dazzle the eye with the intense brightness of their colouring.

Not heeding much the pleasant prospect, gay young cavaliers race in the last half-mile of their journey, scattering, in the exuberance of their spirits, and with many a joke and banter, strings of native servants and coolies laden with boxes of all shapes and sizes. The shrill screams of elephants and grunting of bearers fill the air. Turbaned domestics hasten to and fro dragging about reeking chargers, which are put away in all sorts of sheds and corners, the regular stables having been filled long ago. Nervous young ladies instantly on arrival imploringly inquire "if that wicker basket with the tarlatanes has really arrived," and anxious thoughts will recur, to some of the young men, when visions of that last wet nullah (stream) cross their minds, in connection with their dress coats and boots, stowed away in those most probably leaky petarabs (tin boxes), which when last seen were dangling from the ends of bamboos, slung across the shoulders of wearied and perfectly indifferent Hindoo bearers.

The guests, especially the ladies, have been gathering for some days, for railroads are not, and the less expeditious but more picturesque palanquin, elephants, or mettled Arab, have been brought into requisition to bring them to the rendezvous. Nor have boats been wanting to lend their aid to those who live on the line of the river, as is shown by the gay streamers floating from the mast-heads of the prettily-painted pinnaces moored along the bank of the noble river on which Shikarghur stands.

The house, which is a massive edifice of two lofty storeys, with broad verandahs on all sides and castellated turrets at the four corners, stands in the middle of a park of about one hundred acres, dotted here and there with mango, teak, casarina, tamarind, and banian trees, whose more stately beauties are relieved at intervals by clumps of the feathery bamboo or scented acacia. The whole is surrounded by a low balustraded wall, and has four handsome lodges with gates at the entrances—all these last have been festooned with the gaudy flowers of the Indian marigold, while temporary avenues have been made to the house of whole trunks of the broad-

leaved plantain-tree, from one to the other of which roses, Cape jasmines, and marigolds have been strung in careless profusion.

The lodge-keepers, ancient retainers, have their turbans garlanded with flowers, and stand, while the guests arrive, in smiling and salaaming consciousness of the magnificence of their "get up," their faces being quite brilliant with different caste marks in white and vermillion.

The company has all arrived by nine o'clock, and the hubbub in bachelor's hall, as the detached building containing the billiard and half-a-dozen other rooms is called, is worth witnessing. There are only four bath rooms, and for these (the bath being a matter of course) there are twenty or thirty impatient candidates. The confusion in dressing too is amusing, while not less excitement, albeit more gently displayed, is there in the big house, where all the married couples and charming spinsters are adorning themselves. Here most absurd contrasts appear of form and colour, between the little scraggy jet black or rich brown native ayahs (or ladies' maids) and their fair buxom mistresses, the former guiltless of crinoline and looking like figures taken down from Egyptian bas-reliefs, while the latter are ballooned to alarming circumference.

In due course the guests all assemble in the drawing-room, which is long and lofty, with polished wooden floor, and is furnished more in the French than the English style. Here for the first time a number of the visitors make the acquaintance of their host and hostess. The former is a tall, handsome man, with slightly grizzled hair and moustache, and piercing dark eyes. He is a wonderful specimen of strength and activity, considering that he has been thirty years in India, and but for his weight would give the youngsters a hard tussel to take the spear from him in the boar hunt to-morrow. His wife, had she been in England, would not have been considered old, and might have almost vied with her daughters in appearance; but here she is pale and delicate, and although most lively in her manners, has, when her features are at rest, a worn, fagged look, inseparable from a long residence in the East.

At eleven o'clock breakfast is announced by the white-bearded old *khansamah* (butler), and, well prepared by the morning's exercise and appetizing weather, the party range themselves down each side of the long breakfast-table. Each guest having at least one table servant, a most imposing row of turbaned and bearded retainers is formed behind their masters' and mistresses' chairs, varying in size from the little fancy *khidmutgar*, or boy of eight or ten, to the big, burly, moustached followers of some of the officers, who look more fit to handle the shield and spear than the dish-cover or toasting-fork.

On the covers being removed, which is done in a trice, a thoroughly Indian breakfast is displayed. Conspicuously dotted down the table are piles of snow-white rice, or the same made up with spices into pillau, flanked by dishes of delicious ruhoo fish (Indian carp), cutlets, and relieved here and there by omelettes, hot and palpitating, mutton chops frizzling in enamelled gridirons, or piquant stews made from the breast of the wild duck. Curries of all sorts, made from eggs, vegetables, and prawns, not forgetting that most delicious of all, "the country captain," are ready for those of Eastern tastes, while devilled bones and other more solid condiments are only waiting to be called for. Fish of half-a-dozen kinds are scattered here and there, the prettiest *plat* being made of the sparkling little chunda, impaled on silver skewers, while rare chutnees and sauces are not wanting for the jaded appetite. Those who eschew meat can have

all the famed preserves of India and China; and tea, coffee, or light French wines, have each their votaries.

Acquaintances are rapidly formed by the younger members of the party, while at the upper end of the table an earnest discussion is carried on by Mr. Besborough and those nearest him, resulting in the settlement of the amusements of the day.

The majority make up their minds to pay a visit to the famous Fakeer's tree, the wonder of this part of the country; and, to afford some sport *en route*, Mr. Besborough will send out his pack of dogs, with which the gentlemen can have some runs after jackals or hares.

Very little time is lost before the gravelled circle in front of the house is invaded by a host of elephants, horses, ponies, and *toujons* (chairs carried by four bearers), the trumpeting, screaming, and neighing of the former, and jabbering of the bearers of the latter, making up a perfect Babel. Thump is heard a hollow-sounding crack on that skittish little elephant's head, bestowed by the driver to keep her in order, while the heels of yonder irreclaimably vicious little piebald Rungpore (a district bordering on Bhootan) pony beat the tattoo on the bran-new saddle of the horse nearest him. In the distance two roaring country-bred horses may be seen standing on end and fighting with their forefeet like pugilists, their syces tugging at their distended head-ropes, and being dragged about in all directions thereby.

The elephants are, however, the principal performers in the *mêlée*. How can it be expected that yonder hulking, keen-eyed, cunning monster, which has been all its life in some out-of-the-way planter's service, is to stand the sight of four young ladies, dressed in the height of fashion, who are to ride him? After a great deal of trouble, and a perfect imitation of cooping of casks (these last being represented by the elephants' heads), one huge animal of Mr. Besborough's sets the example of good manners, and kneels down to receive his fair burden, and then all the rest follow, ladders being placed against their sides for mounting purposes. These, to the uninitiated, are dreadful affairs; and the exclamations, as the young ladies try to get up in a becoming manner, are frequent and urgent—a very chorus of little screams arising as each awkward brute surges and jerks to raise himself on all fours. Off they go, scattering the horses (who are terribly afraid of close contact with the elephants) in all directions, and lead the line out of one of the gates. Then follow the *toujons*, the bearers of which groan and moan in a manner quite heart-rending to the inexperienced; and when they lose step, shake some of the stout old ladies till they quiver again. Lastly come the gentlemen, some mounted on beautiful Arabs, or English and Australian horses, down to others of the guests who, not having brought animals of their own, are obliged to be content with the sweepings of their host's stable.

The cavalcade winds sometimes through deeply-shaded village lanes, here and there scaring some dusky maiden, gracefully balancing her water-jar on head or shoulder, or affording food for open-mouthed astonishment to groups of little naked urchins, and then out again into the bright sunlight of the open country. Through the narrow footpaths which wind round the frequent patches of sweet-scented pea or tangled sugar-cane, all have to proceed in single file, the elephants taking toll from everything edible as they march along—nothing comes amiss to them seemingly, from the harsh dry leaves of the bamboo, which they strip off so cleverly with their trunks, to the bunches of grass or peas which they dexterously kick up with their forefeet, grasping



them tightly the while, and then divesting them of all sand or earth by whisking them against their legs, place them carefully in their capacious jaws.

Besborough now orders his pack of dogs to be let loose, and very soon the merry tallyho and rushing of steeds make the elephants all but unmanageable, and announce the starting of some jackal or wild cat, who had made himself a comfortable nest for the heat of the day in the cool, green herbage.

And so the merry party progresses until some very heavy woods are reached. Here thoughts of tigers and snakes begin to disturb the minds of the more timid fair ones, and they almost wish they had not come. Then they enter still deeper gullies, in which the thick branches hang over the path, and noisome vapours arise on all sides, telling of jungle fever and the quaking ague.

When the ladies think they cannot possibly be asked to go further, they suddenly emerge into the intense tropical sunlight, which quivers on beds of pink and white lotus-flowers blooming on the surface of a beautiful lake, the mirror-like centre of an amphitheatre of the forest. On the further side, under the shade of a many-arched banian-tree, are the hut and shrine of the famous Fakcer. On approaching closer, the emaciated form of the recluse is seen squatted on a mat. His eyes are nearly hidden by his long shaggy eyebrows, and his long uncombed hair and beard hang down to his waist. His neck is encircled by a variety of necklaces of beads, coloured pebbles, tigers' teeth and claws, while in one hand held upright is a small pot containing a sacred plant. The arm is quite withered and immovable, having been bound up till it became so fifty years ago.

The old man goes on counting his beads, and not till Besborough has spoken to him twice, and laid a handsome present on the shrine, will the moody recluse speak. He tells a rigmarole story about a rajah and his daughter, and a fisherman and a water spirit, too long and too complicated to be here repeated.

After hearing the wondrous tale, some of the most romantic of the party were at once anxious to explore the ruins of the rajah's palace, and were only deterred by Besborough's saying, "It's all true about the palace, or at least there are immense marble ruins to be seen about half a mile deeper in the wood, but it is not a place to take ladies to, being infested by snakes and other vermin; so by your leave we'll make this old gentleman" (turning to the Fakcer), "show us his tame alligators, and then hey for home."

At a whistle from the gaunt old scarecrow, a dozen hideous snouts were suddenly protruded from the water, and one monster in particular, when called by name, came waddling out to within a few feet of the party.

"He expects a goat, or some other delicacy," said the old man; "if your lordships wish, I have one ready to be sacrificed." As this was decidedly objected to by the ladies, the alligators were dismissed by another whistle; and, glad to get out of the chilling damp of the place, all mounted and wended their way homewards.

We will not weary our readers with the details of a Christmas dinner in the tropics; suffice it to say that all the traditional viands were there, and that the plum-pudding and mince-pies were triumphant evidences of the Englishman's talent in carrying home customs with him abroad.

At nine o'clock the whole park and house were lighted up, and the lively strains of the band brought over by the military guests rang through the pillared verandah. Then began such amusements as the English relish at Christmas in all climates.

The doors were all thrown open and the breeze stole in laden with the perfume of the citron and the jasmine, or that sweeter odour of the native chumpa flower, the broad verandahs affording delicious promenades to those who were tired of the heated rooms. Cheerful songs and well-got-up charades varied the entertainments, and to crown all a serenade was improvised when the ladies had retired, not yet to rest, but to sit in little groups in the verandahs opening from their rooms discussing the adventures of the day.

Had we space we might chronicle the thrilling details of tiger hunt or conflict with the mighty boar, but we must content ourselves with saying that more gallant horsemen never crossed saddle than those who hunted at Shikarghur that Christmas week, their doughty deeds being sometimes witnessed by the more adventurous of the ladies, who, mounted on elephants, overlooked the sport from a safe distance.

And now with unwilling pen we have to record the breaking up of the party. Slowly and with lingering steps do they leave the hospitable place. Last, and not least, it remains to be told that several wedded pairs date the beginning of their happiness from the Christmas week spent at Shikarghur.

## Varieties.

**SPONGE-FISHING IN CRETE.**—The main industry of the island is the sponge fishery which is pursued on its coasts. It is chiefly carried on by companionships of from twenty to thirty boats, for mutual support and protection. The mode of operation preparatory to a dive is very peculiar and interesting. The diver whose turn it is takes his seat on the deck of the vessel, at either the bow or stern, and, placing by his side a large flat slab of marble, weighing about 25 lbs., to which is attached a rope of the proper length and thickness (1½ inch), he then strips, and is left by his companions to prepare himself. This seems to consist in devoting a certain time to clearing the passages of his lungs by expectoration, and highly inflating them afterwards; thus oxydizing his blood very highly by a repetition of deep inspirations. The operation lasts from five to ten minutes, or more, according to the depth; and during it the operator is never interfered with by his companions, and seldom speaks or is spoken to; he is simply watched by two of them, but at a little distance, and they never venture to urge him or distract him in any way during the process. When from some sensation, known only to himself, after these repeated long-drawn and heavy inspirations, he deems the fitting moment to have arrived, he seizes the slab of marble, and, after crossing himself and uttering a prayer, plunges with it like a returning dolphin into the sea, and rapidly descends. The stone is always held during the descent directly in front of the head, at arm's length, and so as to offer as little resistance as possible; and, by varying its inclination, it acts likewise as a rudder, causing the descent to be more or less vertical, as desired by the diver. As soon as he reaches the bottom, he places the stone under his arm to keep himself down, and then walks about upon the rock, or crawls under its ledges, stuffing the sponges into a netted bag with a hooped mouth, which is strung round his neck to receive them; but he holds firmly to the stone or rope all the while, as his safeguard for returning and for making the known signal at the time he desires it. The hauling up is thus effected: The assistant who has hold of the rope awaiting the signal first reaches down with both hands as low as he can, and there grasping the rope, with a great bodily effort raises it up to nearly arm's length over his head; the second assistant is then prepared to make his grasp as low down as he can reach, and does the same; and soon the two alternately, and by a fathom or more at a time, and with great rapidity, bring the anxious diver to the surface. A heavy blow from his nostrils, to expel the water and exhausted air, indicates to his comrades that he is conscious and breathes; a word or two is then spoken by one of his companions to encourage him if he seems much distressed, as is often the case; and the hearing of the voice is said by them to be a great support at the

moment of their greatest state of exhaustion. A few seconds' rest at the surface, and then the diver returns into the boat to recover, generally putting on an under-garment or jacket, to assist the restoration of the animal heat he has lost, and to prevent the loss of more by the too rapid evaporation of the water from his body.—*Captain Spratt's "Travels in Crete."* (Van Voorst.)

**FAR-OFF VISION.**—In the "Autobiography of Miss Cornelia Knight," lady companion to the Princess Charlotte of Wales (vol. i., p. 136), a curious passage occurs, which may illustrate the papers on "Far-off Vision," in "The Leisure Hour" for August:—"About this time (June 1799), I remarked a very singular phenomenon. I observed a little island opposite to us, of a picturesque form, and apparently not much more distant than Capri is from Naples. Whenever there were a few light clouds in the horizon I could clearly distinguish it, but if the sky happened to be entirely cloudless I could see nothing of it. In answer to my inquiries, I was told that there was no such island visible, and that I must have mistaken a cloud for one. Still I persisted in my belief, because it had always the same shape; and at last I sketched it. On showing this drawing to some of our officers, they said that it resembled one of the Lipari Islands, which lies at a short distance from the rest of the group. The image of this islet had been reflected on the light clouds when they were at a certain angle to its image in the sea, something in the way of the fairy palace at Messina, of which so much has been said."

**GALE'S NON-EXPLOSIVE GUNPOWDER.**—During the meeting of the British Association at Nottingham, some very interesting experiments were displayed in the Castle Grounds. A brisk coal fire was kindled, and when well burnt, a keg of prepared powder, weighing several pounds, was placed on the fire, and watched with great anxiety. When the hoops were burnt through, and the staves began to separate, the company drew back, anticipating an explosion; instead of which, when the cask fell to pieces, the powder appeared to smother and considerably check the fire. Some of the powder was then taken from the fire, and by a very simple and rapid process rendered explosive. This was then placed in a small cask, a fusee lighted, and a considerable explosion was the result. Mr. Gale then took a cask of powder, about the size of an oyster-barrel, under his arm, and stirred it with a *red-hot poker* without producing any further effect than smoke, and when the poker was withdrawn the fire went out.

**COWPER AND COOPER.**—In old English names the diphthong "ow" used generally to be pronounced "oo." Thus the late Archbishop of Canterbury's name Howley was pronounced Hooley. Earl Cowper's name is pronounced "Cooper," as was the name of the poet William Cowper. c. t. w.

[In Lowland Scotch, which is, in fact, old English, a cow is invariably called a coo.]

**CRICKETS ON THE SHASTA PLAINS, OREGON.**—Whatever had been of grass, or herb, or shrub was gone, cleared away by the field-crickets. Never shall I forget this insect array. On getting well upon the plains, I found every inch of ground covered by them; they were as thick as ants on a hill; the mules could not tread without stepping on them; not an atom or vestige of vegetation remained; the ground was as clear as a planed floor. It was about twenty long miles to the next water, and straight across the sand-plains for that entire distance the crickets were as thick as ever. It is impossible to estimate the quantity; but, when you suppose a space of ground twenty-seven miles long, and how wide I know not, but at least twice that, covered with crickets as thick as they could be, you can roughly imagine what they would have looked like if swept into a heap. It was long after sundown when we reached the water, thirsty and utterly worn out; but the stream being wide and swift, the crickets had not crossed it, so our tired animals had a good supper, and we a comfortable camp.—*The Naturalist in British Columbia.* By John Keast Lord, F.Z.S. (Bentley.)

**NITRO-GLYCERINE, OR NITROLEUM.**—Lloyd's Committee requested Captain Grant, R.N., one of the officers of the Salvage Association, to carry out an investigation, with Professor Abel, chemist, Royal Arsenal Laboratory, Woolwich. The result of Captain Grant's inquiry is set out in a report, of which the following is a summary:—The substance is a manufactured substance, composed of glycerine, nitric and sulphuric acids. It is called nitro-glycerine, glonoin oil, and Nobel's patent blasting oil. It is exploded by concussion, and apparently, under ordinary circumstances, by nothing else—neither by friction nor fire. Generally a trifling percussion is sufficient to explode it. Its explosive force is about ten times that of gunpowder. It is usually carried in tin cans, holding each about

25lbs. weight of the oil. It has all the appearance of ordinary oil; so that there is nothing in itself, or in the tins used for its carriage, to give notice of its dangerous nature. The cans are packed each in a wooden case, for carriage by land or water. The oil is manufactured by the patentee, Mr. Nobel, of Hamburg, and by other persons abroad under his license. It is at present employed for blasting only. It is extensively used both abroad and in this country.

**ROMAN PIPERS TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO.**—The pipers, a jovial crew, fond of good eating and drinking, having been deprived by the censors of their ancient customary feast in the Temple of Jupiter, struck to a man, and departed in a body to Tibur. Next day, lo! there was nobody to pipe before the sacrifices! The senate was perplexed. The pipers knew their value, and had hit the right nail; it was a matter of religion, and at Rome religion was the soul of the state. As in a case of the weightiest political importance, ambassadors were despatched to the Tiburtines to procure the restitution of the vagabond musicians. But promises and exhortations were exhausted in vain, till a plan was hit upon for securing the men by means of their characteristic failing. On a feast-day they were invited separately to dinner, on pretence of enlivening the meal with their music; they were plied with wine, till drunkenness, and next sleep, oppressed them, and in this state of double oblivion were bound, put into waggons, and conveyed to Rome. Great was their astonishment, on awaking next morning, to find themselves in the Forum! Terms were now made with them, and they were persuaded to remain, on condition that those who had piped at the sacrifices should enjoy their traditional feast, and for three days every year should wander, fantastically dressed, playing their music, through the streets of Rome; a custom which appears to have lasted till the Empire. The sojourner in the modern city may find their counterparts in the pipers of the Abruzzi, who, during nine days before Christmas, pipe their wild, discordant notes before every image of the Madonna.—*P. H. Dyer's "History of the City of Rome."*

**THE NEW CHAPEL AT ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.**—This beautiful new chapel will in time be one of the greatest ornaments of the University of Cambridge. It is not quite correct to say, as stated in a recent article on the Oxford Colleges, that it is exactly modelled after the Sainte-Chapelle or Exeter College Chapel, as it differs from these in some important particulars. As to the cost of the edifice, the part which the late Mr. Hoare, the banker, had in the construction has been greatly misunderstood. When the tower was projected, Mr. Hoare most kindly offered £1000 a year for five years, if he lived so long. But his lamented death took place after two payments had been made. The expense has been defrayed partly by large subscriptions from the present fellows and other members of the college, and partly out of college funds, money having been accumulated for some years back for that purpose.

**A BRIGHT LOOK INTO FUTURITY.**—As a specimen of bathos a little beyond the sublime, and as illustrating the limited vision of science when rejecting the aid of revelation, we give the peroration of the address of Mr. Grove, the President of the British Association at Nottingham. After his able and instructive statement of the progress of scientific discovery, Mr. Grove thus concluded:—"By this patient investigation how much have we already learned! . . . But how much more may we not expect to know? We, this evening assembled, ephemera as we are, have learned, by transmitted labour, to weigh as in a balance other worlds larger and heavier than our own, to know the length of their days and years, to measure their enormous distance from us, and from each other, to detect and accurately ascertain the influence they have on the movements of our world and on each other, and to discover the substances of which they are composed. May we not fairly hope that similar methods of research to those which have taught us so much may give our race farther information, until problems relating not only to remote worlds, but possibly to organized and sentient beings which may inhabit them, problems which it might now seem wildly visionary to enunciate, may be solved by progressive improvements in the modes of applying observation and experiment, induction and deduction?" Such is the ultimatum of mere scientific aspiration and hope! Possibly we may yet ascertain that certain of the elements constituting our globe also exist in distant worlds! Possibly we may guess that organized and sentient beings inhabit them! Till these possibilities are realized, men of science, as well as plain people, may be thankful for the knowledge about man's origin, duties, and destinies revealed in Holy Scripture.